

Exhibit 28

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
Refugee, Asylum and International Operations Directorate
5900 Capital Gateway Drive
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U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

Honduras: Temporary Protected Status (TPS) Country of Origin Information (COI) Considerations¹

Overview

In its most recent annual report on human rights in Honduras, the U.S. Department of State stated:

Violence and extortion persisted at high levels, due to competition among gangs.
[...]

The government took credible steps to identify and punish officials who may have committed human rights abuses or engaged in corruption, but a weak judicial system and corruption were major obstacles to obtaining convictions.

Criminal groups, including local and transnational gangs and narcotics traffickers, were significant perpetrators of violent crimes and committed acts of homicide, torture, kidnapping, extortion, human trafficking, intimidation, and other threats and violence directed against human rights defenders, judicial authorities, lawyers, business community members, journalists, bloggers, women, and other vulnerable populations. The government investigated and prosecuted some of these crimes, but impunity was widespread.²

Despite an overall decline in homicide rates, Honduras remained “the most violent country in Central America.”³

Political Considerations

According to a 2024 country report on Honduras, President Xiomara Castro has had some success while also struggling to address violence and follow through on her commitment to fight corruption:

¹ This report covers the reporting period of January 1, 2023 to March 7, 2025.

² 2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Honduras, U.S. Dep’t. of State (DOS), Apr. 23, 2024, available at: <https://www.ecoi.net/en/document/2107723.html> (last visited Mar. 10, 2025).

³ Honduras Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2025 – Summary, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Dec. 23, 2024, available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/honduras/honduras-humanitarian-needs-and-response-plan-2025-summary> (last visited Mar. 10, 2025).

Her tenure has seen notable achievements, including the extradition of her predecessor, Juan Orlando Hernández, to the United States on drug trafficking charges and the repeal of the Secrets Law, which allowed officials to conceal corrupt activities. However, she also passed an amnesty law shortly after taking office that could shield powerful figures in her party from prosecutions for corruption, raising questions about her commitment to combating it. Like her predecessors, Castro has struggled to address widespread violence within democratic norms, resorting to suspending certain rights to combat extortion affecting small businesses, which she declared a national emergency.⁴

In September 2024, the National Anti-Corruption Council – a Honduran non-governmental organization (NGO) – publicly asked Xiomara Castro to step down as president “after a video was released in which her brother-in-law allegedly received drug money.”⁵ Castro ran for president in 2021 on an anti-corruption platform.⁶ Honduras’ government has characterized “the publication of the video as a political plot.”⁷ According to a September 2024 article by InSight Crime, analysts have “suggested that while corruption within Libre⁸ was not comparable to the entrenched corruption of the National Party,⁹ the credibility of Castro’s government had been dealt a blow by the scandal currently surrounding the President’s family.”¹⁰

Castro’s predecessor, Juan Orlando Hernández, who was extradited to the United States shortly after Castro took office in 2022, was convicted on drug trafficking charges in the United States in June 2024 and sentenced to 45 years in prison.¹¹ The charges included “conspiring to import

⁴ Bertelsmann Stiftung’s Transformation Index (BTI) 2024 Country Report – Honduras, Bertelsmann Stiftung, Mar. 19, 2024, pg. 3, available at: https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2024_HND.pdf.

⁵ Honduras’ president is asked to resign after corruption scandal she says is a plot to oust her, The Associated Press, updated Sep. 4, 2024, available at: <https://apnews.com/article/xiomara-castro-coup-carlos-zelaya-honduras-corruption-60fc69e941f8b8ed55b770da530468bf> (last visited Mar. 20, 2025).

⁶ Honduras’ president is asked to resign after corruption scandal she says is a plot to oust her, The Associated Press, updated Sep. 4, 2024, available at: <https://apnews.com/article/xiomara-castro-coup-carlos-zelaya-honduras-corruption-60fc69e941f8b8ed55b770da530468bf> (last visited Mar. 20, 2025).

⁷ Sam Woolston, Honduras Misses Reform Opportunities Amid Drug Scandal Turmoil, InSight Crime, Sep. 17, 2024, available at: <https://insightcrime.org/news/honduras-reform-opportunities-drug-scandal-turmoil/> (last visited Mar. 20, 2025).

⁸ Libertad y Refundación (Libre) is Xiomara Castro’s political party. See Peter J. Meyer, Honduras: Background and U.S. Relations (Summary), Congressional Research Service, Nov. 30, 2023, available at: <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R47856/2> (last visited Mar. 20, 2025).

⁹ The National Party was the party of Castro’s predecessor, Juan Orlando Hernández, who was convicted on drug trafficking charges in the United States in June 2024. See Peter J. Meyer, Honduras: Background and U.S. Relations (Summary), Congressional Research Service, Nov. 30, 2023, available at: <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R47856/2> (last visited Mar. 20, 2025).

¹⁰ Sam Woolston, Honduras Misses Reform Opportunities Amid Drug Scandal Turmoil, InSight Crime, Sep. 17, 2024, available at: <https://insightcrime.org/news/honduras-reform-opportunities-drug-scandal-turmoil/> (last visited Mar. 20, 2025).

¹¹ Max Mata, Honduras ex-president gets 45 years for drug crimes, BBC News, June 26, 2024, available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c2ee4j1e0g6o> (last visited Mar. 20, 2025).

cocaine into the United States and [...] possessing and conspiring to possess ‘destructive devices,’ including machine guns.”¹²

Freedom House stated in its most recent report covering events of 2023 in Honduras that “political violence is widespread and includes harassment, threats, and intimidation directed at candidates, politicians, and voters, especially women.”¹³ The same report noted, however, that political parties were reportedly “free to operate.”¹⁴

State of Emergency

In November 2022, Honduran President Xiomara Castro announced a state of emergency to combat “crimes like extortion, dismantle criminal groups, reduce gang violence, and lessen insecurity facing many Hondurans.”¹⁵ According to a December 2024 article by the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), “two years later, Honduras’ state of emergency has had little, if any, positive impact.”¹⁶

USIP noted that “Honduras faces a more complex criminal threat than El Salvador¹⁷ with less capacity to meet it,” because of the variety of criminal actors present in Honduras.¹⁸ InSight Crime reported in June 2023 that the Honduran government’s focus on gangs under the state of emergency “ignores the role of other actors, like drug trafficking organizations and corruption networks.”¹⁹ In addition, according to a December 2023 report by Armed Conflict Location &

¹² Colin Moynihan, Former President of Honduras Sentenced to 45 Years in Sweeping Drug Case, The New York Times, June 26, 2024, available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/26/nyregion/honduras-juan-olando-hernando-sentenced-drug-case.html#> (last visited Mar. 20, 2025).

¹³ Freedom in the World 2024 – Honduras, Freedom House, Feb. 29, 2024, available at: <https://www.ecoi.net/en/document/2105027.html> (last visited Mar. 7, 2025).

¹⁴ Freedom in the World 2024 – Honduras, Freedom House, Feb. 29, 2024, available at: <https://www.ecoi.net/en/document/2105027.html> (last visited Mar. 7, 2025).

¹⁵ Helen Montoya, Honduras Makes Few Advances Against Crime During 6-Month State of Exception, InSight Crime, June 5, 2023, available at: <https://insightcrime.org/news/honduras-makes-few-advances-against-crime-during-6-month-state-of-exception/> (last visited Mar. 12, 2025).

¹⁶ Dany Díaz Mejía and Mary Speck, Ph.D., Honduras and El Salvador: Two Crackdowns on Crime with Different Outcomes, United States Institutes of Peace (USIP), Dec. 5, 2024, available at: <https://www.usip.org/publications/2024/12/honduras-and-el-salvador-two-crackdowns-crime-different-outcomes> (last visited Mar. 12, 2025).

¹⁷ El Salvador’s state of emergency has been in place since March 2022 and has succeeded “in debilitating gang structures” through “the use of extreme legal measures; a looser interpretation of gang affiliation; and the concentration of political power around the Bukele administration.” See: Alex Papadovassilakis, ‘Too Many Soldiers’: How Bukele’s Crackdown Succeeded Where Others Failed, InSight Crime, Dec. 6, 2023, available at: <https://insightcrime.org/investigations/too-many-soldiers-how-bukele-crackdown-succeeded-where-others-failed/> (last visited Mar. 20, 2025).

¹⁸ Dany Díaz Mejía and Mary Speck, Ph.D., Honduras and El Salvador: Two Crackdowns on Crime with Different Outcomes, United States Institutes of Peace (USIP), Dec. 5, 2024, available at: <https://www.usip.org/publications/2024/12/honduras-and-el-salvador-two-crackdowns-crime-different-outcomes> (last visited Mar. 12, 2025).

¹⁹ Sean Doherty, Honduras Anti-Gang Crackdown Targets Only One Source of Violence, InSight Crime, June 28, 2023, available at: <https://insightcrime.org/news/honduras-anti-gang-crackdown-targets-only-one-source-violence/> (last visited Mar. 20, 2025). InSight Crime did not provide definitions of the terms “drug trafficking organizations” and “corruption networks” in this article. In its profile of Honduras, updated in 2024, InSight Crime stated that “the primary gangs present in Honduras are the MS13 and Barrio 18, which operate mainly in urban areas like

Event Data (ACLED), “the state of exception fails to include reforms that focus on the fight against corruption within police and judicial institutions to ensure the end of impunity and the prosecution of the perpetrators of violence.”²⁰

The state of emergency has been extended in 45-day increments through April 5, 2025.²¹ In the January 6, 2025 decree which extended the state of emergency through February 19, 2025,²² the Honduran government noted that, in 2024, 58 municipalities (20% of all municipalities nationwide) reported no homicides, and 225 municipalities (76% of all municipalities nationwide) reported 0 to 8 homicides.²³ The government also stated that, under the state of emergency, “992 criminal groups were disbanded; 46 people were captured for purposes of extradition;” and “4,774 gang members” were detained.²⁴

Violence

In its 2024 Homicide Roundup, published in February 2025, InSight Crime noted a continued reduction in homicides in Honduras:

Homicides in Honduras continued to fall markedly in 2024, with a murder rate of 25.3. Bright spots include the country’s two largest cities, Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula, where murder rates halved between 2022 and 2024.

The government credits the gains to the country’s long-running state of emergency, currently in force in 226 of Honduras’ 298 municipalities. However,

Tegucigalpa or San Pedro Sula, as well as in rural zones close to the border with El Salvador. Both gangs are dedicated to extortion and small-scale drug trafficking, and exert substantial control within the country’s prisons. The MS13 has expanded its role in the regional drug trade, but its operations have yet to rival those of larger drug trafficking groups.” InSight Crime also discussed corruption and drug trafficking in Honduras in that same profile: “With every branch of government and its armed forces plagued by corruption, the Central American nation has long played a vital role as a transit point in which criminal groups enjoy official protection. Over the last two decades, political protection has allowed traditional drug trafficking groups to flourish. Testimony provided by drug traffickers and Honduran politicians on trial in the United States has revealed deep-seated connections between organized crime and major political parties. Control of illegal activities in Honduras lies in the hands of local criminal groups connected to the country’s political and economic elite.” See Honduras, InSight Crime, Sep. 6, 2024, available at: <https://insightcrime.org/honduras-organized-crime-news/honduras/> (last visited Mar. 10, 2025).

²⁰ Fighting Gangs Under the State of Exception in Honduras, Armed Conflict Location & Event Data (ACLED), Dec. 5, 2023, available at: <https://acleddata.com/2023/12/05/fighting-gangs-under-the-state-of-exception-in-honduras/> (last visited Mar. 20, 2025).

²¹ Más de 300 hondureños murieron en 85 masacres bajo el estado de excepción [More than 300 Hondurans died in 85 massacres under the state of emergency], La Prensa (Hon.), Mar. 7, 2025, available at: <https://www.laprensa.hn/sucesos/honduras-ola-violencia-masacres-estado-expcion-NF24748702> (last visited Mar. 7, 2025.)

²² The subsequent decree extending the state of emergency through April 5, 2025 was not available on the Honduran government’s website at the time this paper was prepared.

²³ La Gaceta – Diario Oficial de la República de Honduras [The Gazette – Official Daily Newspaper of the Republic of Honduras], Num. 36,732, Jan. 6, 2025, pg. 2, available at:

https://www.sep.gob.hn/en/_files/ugd/ce1f7a_abe2a5995a924ca38d875a3ab31bc57f.pdf.

²⁴ La Gaceta – Diario Oficial de la República de Honduras [The Gazette – Official Daily Newspaper of the Republic of Honduras], Num. 36,732, Jan. 6, 2025, pg. 3, available at:

https://www.sep.gob.hn/en/_files/ugd/ce1f7a_abe2a5995a924ca38d875a3ab31bc57f.pdf.

homicide rates have fallen both in areas with and without the emergency measures, casting doubt on these claims.

Not all regions followed the national trend. Killings in the country's Bay Islands, a tourist hotspot, increased, and the department closed 2024 as the country's most homicidal.²⁵

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) stated in December 2024 that "although national homicide rates have declined, Honduras remains one of Latin America's most violent countries, with the highest rates [of violence] in Central America."²⁶

Attacks on Human Rights Defenders

In its July 2024 report on human rights in Honduras (covering the period from January 1 through December 31, 2023), the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) noted "a considerable increase in attacks on human rights defenders":

particularly those defending land, territory and the environment, and journalists, without any effective measures being taken by the State to respond to the situation of risk that they face. [...]

The Office noted that the number of attacks against journalists and human rights defenders and organizations, including murders, increased significantly in comparison with the previous two years. In view of the increased risk faced by human rights defenders, the failure of the national protection system to respond effectively is of concern, especially its failure to implement suitable protection measures in a timely and effective manner.²⁷

In one example of violence against land defenders, two men who had participated in protests and fought against "an illegally sanctioned" iron ore mine in their town were shot and killed "in broad daylight" in Guapinol, Honduras in January 2023.²⁸ Honduran authorities attributed the deaths "to a botched mugging – even though the assailants fled without taking the victims' moped, cellphones or money," while "UN agencies, rights groups, and the U.S. embassy

²⁵ Marina Cavalari, Juliana Manjarrés and Christopher Newton, InSight Crime's 2024 Homicide Round-Up, InSight Crime, Feb. 26, 2025, available at: <https://insightcrime.org/news/insight-crime-2024-homicide-round-up/#honduras-26-5> (last visited Mar. 6, 2025).

²⁶ Honduras Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2025 – Summary, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Dec. 23, 2024, available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/honduras/honduras-humanitarian-needs-and-response-plan-2025-summary> (last visited Mar. 10, 2025).

²⁷ Situation of Human Rights in Honduras, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), pg. 3 and pg. 10, July 23, 2024, available at: <https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2115962/g2403549.pdf>.

²⁸ Nina Lakhani, Honduran environmental defenders shot dead in broad daylight, The Guardian, Jan. 11, 2023, available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/jan/11/honduras-environmental-defenders-shot-dead-guapinol-mine> (last visited Mar. 20, 2025).

condemned the killings” as possible retaliation for their work defending the environment after members of the community had received ongoing threats and harassment.²⁹

The Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), along with a host of other organizations and individuals, issued a statement in June 2024, condemning attacks and harassment against indigenous Garifuna³⁰ leaders “by third-party settlers, including owners of extractivist and palm-oil projects, tourism investors, and drug-traffickers.”³¹ The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) filed a case against the government of Honduras with the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in November 2023 regarding “violations of the right to collective property of the Garifuna community in the Cochinos Cays, as well as the lack of adequate, effective resources to address that issue.”³² USIP noted in January 2024 that Garifuna have suffered “vicious cycles of human rights abuses,” as well as:

forced displacement, and violence from political and organized crime. In recent years, these threats have only accelerated amid a competition to control the Garifuna’s traditional lands in Honduras for the sake of tourist development and resource extraction. With few economic opportunities, a lack of policies to protect their rights, and increasingly impacted by climate change, Garifuna people are migrating in large numbers both within Central America and to the United States.³³

Tourism

Tourism accounted for 10.5% of Honduras’ gross domestic product (GDP) in 2023.³⁴

In its most recent travel advisory issued on December 10, 2024, with an intended audience of U.S. tourists considering travel to Honduras, the U.S. Department of State (DOS) categorized Honduras as “Level 3: Reconsider Travel,” due to crime, with the exception of the department of

²⁹ Nina Lakhani, Honduran environmental defenders shot dead in broad daylight, The Guardian, Jan. 11, 2023, available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/jan/11/honduras-environmental-defenders-shot-dead-guapinol-mine> (last visited Mar. 20, 2025).

³⁰ The Garifuna are an Afro-indigenous population in Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. *See: Garifuna in Honduras*, Minority Rights Group, last updated May 2018, available at: <https://minorityrights.org/communities/garifuna-2/> (last visited Mar. 20, 2025).

³¹ International Organizations & Individuals Stand in Solidarity with the Garifuna people of Honduras, The Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), June 13, 2024, available at: <https://www.wola.org/2024/06/international-organizations-in-solidarity-with-garifuna-people-honduras/> (last visited Mar. 20, 2025).

³² IACHR Files Application Before Inter-American Court of Human Rights in Case Concerning Honduras Over Violations of Garifuna Community’s Right to Collective Property, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), Dec. 29, 2023, available at: https://www.oas.org/en/iachr/jsForm/?File=/en/iachr/media_center/preleases/2023/327.asp (last visited Mar. 20, 2025).

³³ The Afro-Indigenous Peoples of Honduras: Exclusion, Conflict, and Migration, United States Institute of Peace (USIP), Jan. 24, 2024, available at: <https://www.usip.org/events/afro-indigenous-peoples-honduras-exclusion-conflict-and-migration> (last visited Mar. 12, 2025).

³⁴ Tourism – Honduras, World Bank Group, Oct. 31, 2024, available at: https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099712511202411828/pdf/IDU1f4ac942b1c22c144e01a26f1c28635ee_a725.pdf.

Gracias a Dios, which DOS categorized as “Level 4: Do not travel.”³⁵ The travel advisory noted additional warnings, while also stating that resort locations in the Bay Islands were “better policed” than the rest of the country:

Violent crime, such as homicide, armed robbery, and kidnapping, remains common. Violent gang activity, such as extortion, violent street crime, rape, narcotics, and human trafficking, is widespread. Local authorities may lack sufficient resources to respond effectively to serious crime incidents. Around resort areas in the Bay Islands, which include Roatan, Utila, and Guanaja, there is a concentration of resources, and these areas are better policed.

Demonstrations occur regularly throughout the country and can be about a variety of political or economic issues. Protests, demonstrations, tire burnings, and roadblocks are frequent, unpredictable, and can turn violent. They can shutdown roads and highways, often without prior notice or estimated reopening timelines.

In December 2022, the Government of Honduras declared a “State of Exception” in response to high levels of extortion and other crimes. The declaration remains in effect and has been modified to include more cities. It allows the police to suspend constitutional rights in 226 of the country’s 298 municipalities.

The Honduran Ministry of Health declared in June 2024 a national emergency in Honduras due to an increase in dengue cases. The Ministry of Health has carried out dengue prevention, control, and surveillance activities, along with the promotion of preventive measures through the media and educational campaigns. It also carried out clean-up operations and campaigns, including the use of chemical and biological agents for vector control.³⁶

The United Kingdom’s government website also provided information for travelers about tourist destinations in Honduras:

Petty theft is a problem in cities and tourist areas, including the Bay Islands (Roatán, Utila and Guanaja). Avoid walking around Tegucigalpa, San Pedro Sula and other main towns and cities in mainland Honduras. Be particularly careful at bus stations, airports, isolated beaches, tourist sites and on public transport. [...]

[E]mergency medical facilities on the Bay Islands are extremely limited.³⁷

³⁵ Honduras Travel Advisory, U.S. Dep’t. of State (DOS), Dec. 10, 2024, available at: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/honduras-travel-advisory.html> (last visited Mar. 10, 2025).

³⁶ Honduras Travel Advisory, U.S. Dep’t. of State (DOS), Dec. 10, 2024, available at: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/honduras-travel-advisory.html> (last visited Mar. 10, 2025).

³⁷ Foreign travel advice – Honduras, Gov.UK, undated, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/honduras/safety-and-security> (last visited Mar. 12, 2025).

The Canadian government's travel information page on Honduras noted that "the Bay Islands are generally safe. Violent crime is lower, but petty crime sometimes occurs. Some foreigners have been assaulted on beaches, mainly at night. Home burglaries have also occurred, sometimes in rental accommodations."³⁸ According to InSight Crime, the homicide rate increased in the Bay Islands in 2024, and that department had the highest homicide rate in the country by the end of 2024.³⁹

Environmental Considerations

According to a May 2023 report by The World Bank Group, "Honduras is highly vulnerable to extreme natural hazards."⁴⁰ OCHA reported in January 2024 that "throughout 2023, Honduras experienced significant effects from the El Niño phenomenon and a drought that affected subsistence farmers' crops. The country was further impacted by heavy rains and the effects of Tropical Storm Pilar."⁴¹ In a December 2024 report, OCHA reiterated that "Honduras is highly vulnerable to storms, floods, and prolonged droughts, particularly in the Dry Corridor, where erratic rainfall affects food production."⁴²

A November 2023 article about the effects of Hurricane Mitch 25 years after it hit Honduras in 1998 noted that Tegucigalpa is now "more vulnerable to natural disasters."⁴³ Tegucigalpa was on "preventative alert" due to rain at the time that article was published.⁴⁴ As of November 2023, Tegucigalpa did not have a development plan to account for areas in the city that are particularly vulnerable to the effects of natural disasters, and more than 50% of the city's population lived in those high-risk zones.⁴⁵

³⁸ Honduras Travel Advice, Government of Canada, Mar. 6, 2025, available at: <https://travel.gc.ca/destinations/honduras> (last visited Mar. 10, 2025).

³⁹ Marina Cavalari, Juliana Manjarrés and Christopher Newton, InSight Crime's 2024 Homicide Round-Up, InSight Crime, Feb. 26, 2025, available at: <https://insightcrime.org/news/insight-crime-2024-homicide-round-up/#honduras-26-5> (last visited Mar. 6, 2025).

⁴⁰ Country and Climate Development Report – Honduras, The World Bank Group, May 23, 2023, pg. 16, available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/honduras/honduras-country-climate-and-development-report> (last visited Mar. 20, 2025).

⁴¹ Honduras: Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Jan. 23, 2024, pg. 3, available at: https://reliefweb.int/report/honduras/honduras-humanitarian-needs-and-response-plan-january-2024?_gl (last visited Mar. 20, 2025). Tropical Storm Pilar lasted from October 30 to November 1, 2023. *See:* Eric Blake, National Hurricane Center Tropical Cyclone Report: Tropical Storm Pilar, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA), Mar. 8, 2024, pg.15, available at: https://www.nhc.noaa.gov/data/tcr/EP192023_Pilar.pdf.

⁴² Honduras Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2025 – Summary, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Dec. 23, 2024, available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/honduras/honduras-humanitarian-needs-and-response-plan-2025-summary> (last visited Mar. 10, 2025).

⁴³ Germán Reyes, Tegucigalpa sigue vulnerable tras 25 años [Tegucigalpa is still vulnerable after 25 years], Agencia EFE (Spa.), Nov. 2, 2023, available at: <https://efe.com/medio-ambiente/2023-11-02/la-capital-de-honduras-recuerda-los-danos-del-huracan-mitch/> (last visited Mar. 20, 2025).

⁴⁴ Germán Reyes, Tegucigalpa sigue vulnerable tras 25 años [Tegucigalpa is still vulnerable after 25 years], Agencia EFE (Spa.), Nov. 2, 2023, available at: <https://efe.com/medio-ambiente/2023-11-02/la-capital-de-honduras-recuerda-los-danos-del-huracan-mitch/> (last visited Mar. 20, 2025).

⁴⁵ Germán Reyes, Tegucigalpa sigue vulnerable tras 25 años [Tegucigalpa is still vulnerable after 25 years], Agencia EFE (Spa.), Nov. 2, 2023, available at: <https://efe.com/medio-ambiente/2023-11-02/la-capital-de-honduras-recuerda-los-danos-del-huracan-mitch/> (last visited Mar. 20, 2025).

Tropical Depression 9, which later became Hurricane Helene, left significant rainfall throughout Honduras in late September 2024.⁴⁶ The WFP reported that “rainfall from Hurricane Helene increased flooding, with [sic] triggering flash floods and disrupting access in lowland communities. 25,000 people across 92 communities were directly affected by flooding and livelihood losses.”⁴⁷

Honduras was hit by Tropical Storm Sara on November 14, 2024, with damage reported “in 17 of 18 departments and 85 of 298 municipalities,”⁴⁸ with “over 238,500 people [...] affected due to damages caused to water and sanitation systems.”⁴⁹ As of November 18, 2024, 1,797 communities remained “cut off” due to “impassable,” “affected” “damaged” or “destroyed” roadways.⁵⁰ Rainfall levels from Tropical Storm Sara were reportedly similar to levels “during [hurricanes] Eta and Iota in 2020, pushing dams to their limits.”⁵¹ OCHA stated in December 2024 that Tropical Storm Sara contributed “to a worsening food crisis, especially in the northern part of the country.”⁵²

OCHA noted in its January 2024 report that “one of the major consequences” of frequent storms and floods in Honduras “is the destruction of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), housing and transport infrastructure.”⁵³

Infrastructure

Bertelsmann Stiftung, a private German foundation, reported in 2024 that Honduras “suffers from patchy delivery of public services, including transport, access to adequate water and

⁴⁶ Fernanda Rodríguez, Fuertes lluvias azotarán Honduras debido a la depresión tropical 9, según César Quintanilla [Strong rains will hit Honduras due to tropical depression 9, according to [expert] César Quintanilla], Televicentro (Hon.), Sep. 24, 2024, available at: <https://www.televicentro.com/fuertes-lluvias-honduras-depresion-tropical-9-cezar-quintanilla-2024-09-24> (last visited Mar. 20, 2025).

⁴⁷ WFP Honduras Country Brief, World Food Programme (WFP), Oct. 2024, pg. 2, available at: https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000162847/download/?_ga=2.262854156.1857486660.1734727133-1118873269.1734456483 (last visited Mar. 20, 2025).

⁴⁸ Central America: Tropical Storm Sara - Flash Update No. 2, United Nations Offices for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Nov. 18, 2024, available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/honduras/central-america-tropical-storm-sara-flash-update-no-2-18-november-2024> (last visited Mar. 20, 2025).

⁴⁹ UNICEF Honduras Humanitarian Situation Report No. 01, United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), Nov. 21, 2024, available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/honduras/unicef-honduras-humanitarian-situation-report-no-01-tropical-storm-sara-21-november-2024> (last visited Mar. 20, 2025).

⁵⁰ Central America: Tropical Storm Sara - Flash Update No. 2, United Nations Offices for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Nov. 18, 2024, available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/honduras/central-america-tropical-storm-sara-flash-update-no-2-18-november-2024> (last visited Mar. 20, 2025).

⁵¹ Central America: Tropical Storm Sara - Flash Update No. 2, United Nations Offices for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Nov. 18, 2024, available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/honduras/central-america-tropical-storm-sara-flash-update-no-2-18-november-2024> (last visited Mar. 20, 2025).

⁵² Honduras Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2025 – Summary, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Dec. 23, 2024, available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/honduras/honduras-humanitarian-needs-and-response-plan-2025-summary> (last visited Mar. 10, 2025).

⁵³ Honduras: Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Jan. 23, 2024, pg.10, available at: https://reliefweb.int/report/honduras/honduras-humanitarian-needs-and-response-plan-january-2024?_gl (last visited Mar. 20, 2025).

sewage systems, education and training.”⁵⁴ DOS said in its 2024 Investment Climate report for Honduras that “sectors in which U.S. companies frequently encounter problems include infrastructure, telecoms, mining, and energy.”⁵⁵

In September 2023, the United Nations Development Programme stated that water shortages were common in Tegucigalpa, the capital of Honduras.⁵⁶ The lack of potable water remained “a significant barrier to achieving the [sustainable development goals] in the country,” as “over 45% of the population lacks stable access to safe drinking water.”⁵⁷ The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child noted in January 2025 that it was concerned “that thousands of children do not have access to safe water sources or decent sanitation services” in Honduras.⁵⁸

Regarding travel by roadways in Honduras, DOS noted in its December 2024 travel advisory that “driving in Honduras can be dangerous” due to “crime, poor road conditions, and heavy commercial truck traffic.”⁵⁹ Furthermore, the advisory said that “rocksides are common, especially in the rainy season (May through December) and can cause closure of major highways.”⁶⁰

In terms of healthcare infrastructure, the Inter-American Development Bank stated in a September 2023 press release that “the health system in Honduras faces important challenges in access to health services, which especially affect the most vulnerable people. The lack of quality hospital infrastructure is one of the main determinants that limit this access.”⁶¹

Health Concerns

⁵⁴ Bertelsmann Stiftung’s Transformation Index (BTI) 2024 Country Report – Honduras, Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2024, pg. 8, available at: https://btiproject.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2024_HND.pdf.

⁵⁵ 2024 Investment Climate Statements: Honduras, U.S. Department of State (DOS), available at: <https://www.state.gov/reports/2024-investment-climate-statements/honduras/> (last visited Mar. 7, 2025).

⁵⁶ Monserrat Xilotl, How forests and young people are solving Honduras’s water crisis, United Nations Development Programme, Sep. 7, 2023, available at: <https://www.undp.org/stories/how-forests-and-young-people-are-solving-honduras-water-crisis> (last visited Mar. 10, 2025).

⁵⁷ United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to development, Mr Surya Deva; Country visit to Honduras 11-21 November 2024; Preliminary observations and recommendations, UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Nov. 21, 2024, available at:

<https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/development/sr/20241121-eom-honduras-sr-rtd-en.pdf>.

⁵⁸ Concluding observations on the combined sixth and seventh periodic reports of Honduras [CRC/C/HND/CO/6-7], United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Jan. 31, 2025, pg. 11, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2121977/CRC_C_HND_CO_6-7_62285_E.pdf.

⁵⁹ Honduras Travel Advisory, U.S. Dep’t. of State (DOS), Dec. 10, 2024, available at: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/honduras-travel-advisory.html> (last visited Mar. 10, 2025).

⁶⁰ Honduras Travel Advisory, U.S. Dep’t. of State (DOS), Dec. 10, 2024, available at: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/honduras-travel-advisory.html> (last visited Mar. 10, 2025).

⁶¹ IDB Approves \$150 Million to Improve the Health System in Honduras, Inter-American Development Bank, Sep. 27, 2023, available at: <https://www.iadb.org/en/news/idb-approves-150-million-improve-health-system-honduras> (last visited Mar. 10, 2025).

In June 2024, Honduras “declared a national health emergency after reporting a rise in hospitalizations and deaths from dengue.”⁶² Honduras’ health ministry had “reported 23,037 suspected cases of dengue in the first 20 weeks of the year, [...] one of the highest totals in the Americas.”⁶³ By September 2024, the number of reported cases of dengue in Honduras had risen to more than 110,000.⁶⁴ Dengue, which “causes flu-like symptoms and can lead to death in extreme cases,” is spread by mosquitoes.⁶⁵

Economy

In its overview of Honduras, the World Bank Group said that “Honduras has made progress in reducing poverty, although it still ranks as one of the poorest and most unequal countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.”⁶⁶ The Central Intelligence Agency’s (CIA) World Factbook stated in its most recent update in November 2024 that “Honduras is one of the poorest countries in Latin America and has one of the world’s highest murder rates. More than half of the population lives in poverty and per capita income is one of the lowest in the region.”⁶⁷

The World Food Programme (WFP) classified Honduras as a “lower-middle-income country” in October 2024, noting that, despite “sustained economic growth for the last two decades,” problems like “high poverty rates, extensive income inequality, and risks such as crime and climate variability threaten peace and humanitarian aid efforts and hinder mid-to-long-term initiatives, affecting development gains and causing human capital drain through migration.”⁶⁸

The World Bank Group discussed GDP and inflation trends in its October 2024 overview of Honduras:

the real GDP of the Honduran economy grew by approximately 3.6 percent in 2023, reflecting a deceleration when compared to the 4 percent recorded in 2022. [...] In 2022, the inflation rate reached 9.1 percent, the highest since 2008, due to the strong impact of rising global food and fuel commodity prices, while the monetary authorities did not raise the key monetary policy interest rate. However, inflation has declined since February 2023 and stood at 5 percent in August 2024,

⁶² Michael Rios, Honduras declares health emergency as Central America starts peak dengue season, CNN, June 1, 2024, available at: <https://www.cnn.com/2024/06/01/health/honduras-health-dengue/index.html> (last visited Mar. 20, 2025).

⁶³ Michael Rios, Honduras declares health emergency as Central America starts peak dengue season, CNN, June 1, 2024, available at: <https://www.cnn.com/2024/06/01/health/honduras-health-dengue/index.html> (last visited Mar. 20, 2025).

⁶⁴ Honduras: MSF responds to dengue emergency in Cortés department, Medecins sans Frontières (MSF) [Doctors without Borders], Sep. 11, 2024, available at: <https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/latest/honduras-msf-responds-dengue-emergency-cortes-department> (last visited Mar. 20, 2025).

⁶⁵ Michael Rios, Honduras declares health emergency as Central America starts peak dengue season, CNN, June 1, 2024, available at: <https://www.cnn.com/2024/06/01/health/honduras-health-dengue/index.html> (last visited Mar. 20, 2025).

⁶⁶ Honduras: Overview, World Bank Group, Oct. 7, 2024, available at:

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/honduras/overview> (last visited Mar. 10, 2025).

⁶⁷ Honduras, The World Factbook, Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), last updated Mar. 3, 2025, available at: <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/honduras/> (last visited Mar. 11, 2025).

⁶⁸ WFP Honduras Country Brief, World Food Programme (WFP), Oct. 2024, pg. 1, available at: <https://www.wfp.org/countries/honduras> (last visited Mar. 20, 2025).

0.7 percentage points lower than the previous year and within the central bank's tolerance range. The decrease was driven by declining international food and fuel prices and supported by liquidity absorption measures instituted by the central bank.⁶⁹

In September 2024, Honduras' Supreme Court "declared unconstitutional the legal underpinning of special economic zones exempt from local laws and taxes known as ZEDEs, which have drawn foreign investors lured by the promise of light taxation and regulation."⁷⁰ In 2022, the legislature repealed the law that created the ZEDEs, but ZEDEs already in existence at the time the law was repealed had continued to operate because "a related decree that would have repealed constitutional articles related to ZEDEs did not receive the necessary two-thirds support in the legislature."⁷¹

A report prepared by several advocacy groups and released in September 2024 provided additional background on ZEDEs:

ZEDEs are territories that enjoy a maximum degree of autonomy in terms of legal, tax and administrative regulation due to the fact that, according to their promoters, this helps attract private investment and promotes a favorable business environment. In that sense, ZEDEs have rules that differ from the general laws of the country, existing within the borders of the state, but outside of national jurisdiction. These projects have been the subject of great debate and controversy in Honduras, as they involve a cession of sovereignty.

Various social, trade, business, academic and religious organizations and local governments (municipalities) in Honduras argue that the ZEDEs violate the Constitution because they imply a territorial exception to national jurisdiction and a modification of the form of government in these territories, which in fact implies a loss of national sovereignty. ZEDEs are also criticized because their implementation has implied the transgression of human rights due to the displacement of communities and environmental destruction. Thus, although several ZEDEs have been proposed since their approval in 2013, their implementation and progress have been subject to challenges and resistance in different locations.⁷²

Return to Honduras

⁶⁹ The World Bank in Honduras: Overview, World Bank Group, Oct. 7, 2024, available at: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/honduras/overview> (last visited Mar. 7, 2025).

⁷⁰ Gustavo Palencia, Honduras top court declares self-governing ZEDE zones unconstitutional, Reuters, Sep. 20, 2024, available at: <https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/honduras-top-court-declares-self-governing-zede-zones-unconstitutional-2024-09-20/> (last visited Mar. 20, 2025).

⁷¹ Freedom in the World 2024 – Honduras, Freedom House, Feb. 29, 2024, available at: <https://www.ecoi.net/en/document/2105027.html> (last visited Mar. 20, 2025).

⁷² The Corporate Assault on Honduras: Mafia-style investments and the Honduran people's struggle for democracy and dignity, Institute for Policy Studies - Mining and Trade Project (IPS), the Transnational Institute (TNI), TerraJusta, and the Honduras Solidarity Network (HSN), Sep. 2024, pg. 31-32, available at: https://ips-dc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/honduras_isds_full_report.pdf.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) noted in October 2024 that the high level of violence in Honduras continues to be a factor in both internal and external displacement:

Honduras continues to rank as the second most violent country in Latin America and first in Central America, forcing many to flee resulting in more than 250,000 IDPs [internally displaced persons] and 300,000 Honduran refugees or asylum-seekers. In 2024, over 32,000 Hondurans have been returned so far, with many leaving the country again. Honduras also remains a main transit country for persons engaged in mixed movements across Central America.⁷³

Other factors contributing to “a continual outflow of people” from Honduras, in addition to violence, were “poverty, food insecurity, inequality” and the effects of natural disasters.⁷⁴

In its annual report covering events of 2023, Human Rights Watch reported that “President Castro signed a law to boost government help for communities and individual victims of internal displacement.”⁷⁵ In January 2025, the Honduran government enacted a plan called “Brother, Come Home,” which “includes providing a ‘solidarity’ monetary bonus -amount unspecified-, food support and access to employment programs for Hondurans who arrive deported from the United States.”⁷⁶

Freedom of Movement

In its 2023 report on human rights in Honduras, the U.S. Department of State reported that:

The law provided for freedom of internal movement, foreign travel, emigration, and repatriation, and the government generally respected these rights.

In-country Movement: There were areas where authorities could not assure freedom of movement due to criminal activity and a lack of significant government presence.⁷⁷

⁷³ Forced displacement in and from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras (October 2024), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Oct. 14, 2024, available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/honduras/forced-displacement-and-el-salvador-guatemala-and-honduras-october-2024> (last visited Mar. 20, 2025).

⁷⁴ Honduras: Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Mar. 15, 2024, pg. 9, available at: https://reliefweb.int/report/honduras/honduras-humanitarian-needs-and-response-plan-january-2024?_gl (last visited Mar. 20, 2025).

⁷⁵ World Report 2024 – Honduras, Human Rights Watch, Jan. 11, 2024, available at: <https://www.ecoi.net/en/document/2103221.html> (last visited Mar. 20, 2025)

⁷⁶ Honduras Prepares for Mass Deportations Under Trump, Agence France-Presse (AFP), Jan. 26, 2025, available at: <https://ticotimes.net/2025/01/26/honduras-prepares-for-mass-deportations-under-trump> (last visited Mar. 12, 2025).

⁷⁷ 2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Honduras, U.S. Dep’t. of State (DOS), Apr. 23, 2024, available at: <https://www.ecoi.net/en/document/2107723.html> (last visited Mar. 10, 2025).